

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] TWO MASSACHUSETTS MEN ARRESTED AND CHARGED WITH NATIONWIDE SCHEME TO STEAL SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS AND CRYPTOCURRENCY

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## The United States Department of Justice

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Note:** A copy of the indictment can be found [here](#).

### **TWO MASSACHUSETTS MEN ARRESTED AND CHARGED WITH NATIONWIDE SCHEME TO STEAL SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS AND CRYPTOCURRENCY**

WASHINGTON – Two Massachusetts men were arrested today and charged in U.S. District Court in Boston with conducting an extensive scheme to take over victims’ social media accounts and steal their cryptocurrency using techniques such as “SIM swapping,” computer hacking and other methods.

Assistant Attorney General Brian A. Benczkowski of the Justice Department’s Criminal Division, U.S. Attorney Andrew E. Lelling for the District of Massachusetts, Special Agent in Charge Joseph R. Bonavolonta of the FBI’s Boston Field Office and Special Agent in Charge Kristina O’Connell of IRS Criminal Investigations (IRS-CI) made the announcement.

Eric Meiggs, 21, of Brockton, Massachusetts, and Declan Harrington, 20, of Rockport, Massachusetts, were charged in an 11-count indictment, charging them with one count of conspiracy, eight counts of wire fraud, one count of computer fraud and abuse and one count of aggravated identity theft.

According to the indictment, Meiggs and Harrington allegedly targeted executives of cryptocurrency companies and others who likely had significant amounts of cryptocurrency and those who had high value or “OG” (slang for “Original Gangster”) social media account names. Meiggs and Harrington allegedly conspired to hack into, and take control over, these victims’ online accounts so they could obtain things of value, such as cryptocurrency. They used an illegal practice known as “SIM-swapping” and other techniques to access, take control of, and in some cases steal cryptocurrency from, the accounts.

As alleged in the indictment, with “SIM swapping” cybercriminals convince a victim’s cell phone carrier to reassign the victim’s cell phone number from the SIM card (or Subscriber Identity Module card) inside the victim’s cell phone to the SIM card inside a cell phone controlled by the cybercriminals. Cybercriminals then pose as the victim with an online

account provider and request that the provider send account password-reset links or an authentication code to the SIM-swapped device now controlled by the cybercriminals. The cybercriminals can then reset the victim's account log-in credentials and can then use the log-in credentials to access the victim's account without authorization, or "hack into" the account.

According to the indictment, Meiggs and Harrington targeted at least 10 identified victims around the country. Members of the conspiracy allegedly stole, or attempted to steal, over \$550,000 in cryptocurrency from these victims alone. Meiggs allegedly took control over two victims' "OG" accounts with social media companies.

The FBI and IRS-CI are investigating the case. Senior Trial Attorney Mona Sedky of the Criminal Division's Computer Crime and Intellectual Property Section and Assistant U.S. Attorney Amy Harman Burkart, Chief of the Cybercrime Unit, are prosecuting the case.

The details contained in the charging documents are allegations. The defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

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